



# CHRISTIE'S GENEVA



**Thursday, November 15, 1984**





# CATALOGUE

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IN THE MAIN CATALOGUE

**The bidding in this sale will be conducted in Swiss Francs**

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1. *Private viewing:*

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VIEWING TIMES

Geneva, Hotel Richemond

Friday,	November	9	10.00-18.00 hours
Saturday,	November	10	10.00-18.00 hours
Sunday,	November	11	10.00-18.00 hours
Monday,	November	12	10.00-18.00 hours
Tuesday,	November	13	10.00-18.00 hours
Wednesday,	November	14	10.00-18.00 hours



**A magnificent Papal Presentation Dish,  
by Giovanni Francesco Travani,  
Rome, 1670**

Which will be sold at Auction by

**CHRISTIE'S (INTERNATIONAL) S.A.**

**HANS NADELHOFFER   RICHARD STERN   GEORGES DE BARTHA**

**8, Place de la Taconnerie, 1204 Geneva**

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**AT THE HOTEL RICHEMOND, GENEVA  
8-10 rue A.-Fabri, Tel. 31 14 00**

**ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 15, 1984**

**Lot 607**

**Huissier: Me Henri Scagliola**

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**In sending commissions or making enquiries, this sale should be referred to as  
"TRAVANI"**

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*THE PROPERTY OF A EUROPEAN NOBLE FAMILY*

Lot 607

**A MAGNIFICENT PAPAL PRESENTATION DISH CAST AND CHASED WITH THE RAPE OF EUROPA by Giovanni Francesco Travani, Rome, 1670 with the mark of Giovanni Giordani, bollatore degli argenti**

Europa sitting astride the bull escorted to the water by nymphs while three amorini shoot down arrows from the sky, within a band of tied laurel and a broad frieze of tritons and dolphins supporting four coats-of-arms set on crosses of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem and surmounted by Marquess's coronets, all linked by foliate swags and ribbons hung from shells and lion masks, the whole enclosed by a band of oak leaves bound in ribbons

Diameter 100cm.  
Weight 11.500 kg.





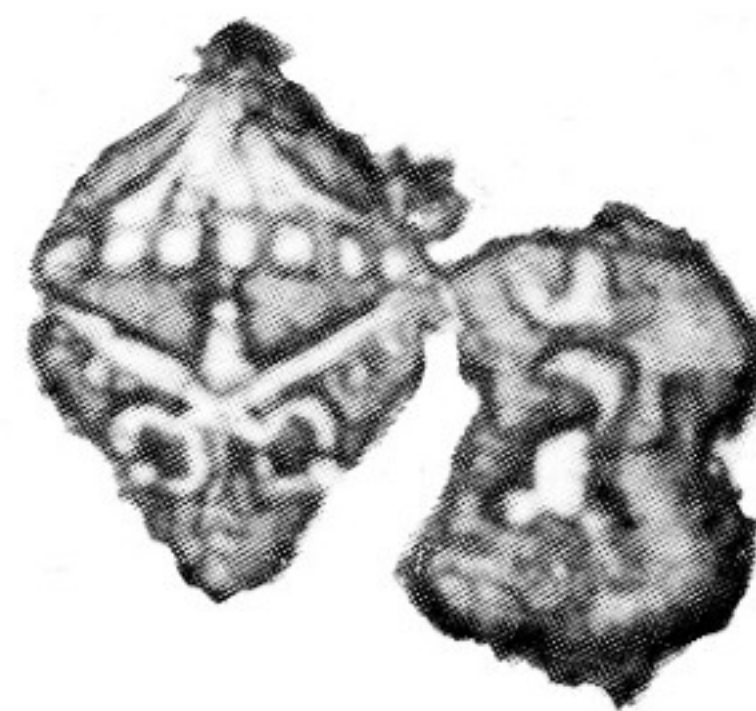






Giovanni Francesco Travani was born in Rome in 1640, the son of Gioacchino Francesco Travani and Agata Panimella, and received his licence to practice as a seal cutter and medallist on 15 February 1669. By 1696 he was living in the Via dei Coronari, at the sign of the Eagle. The following year he was elected to the office of second Consul of the Roman Goldsmiths' Guild and Chamberlain in 1702. He is recorded as working for the Sacro Palazzo Apostolico and as having supplied the matrix for the Agnus Dei in 1690, 1698, 1699 and 1701 and, in 1702 was paid 17.50 Scudi for a seal bearing the arms of the sacristan of the Palazzo, Pietro Lamberti Ledrou quartered with the arms of Clement IX. Constantino Bulgari *Argentieri, Gemmari e Orafi d'Italia*, part I, Rome, Vol. II (Rome, 1959), pp. 482-83, records that Travani's mark—an eagle—occurs on a note to his lawyer dated 16th July 1606 but he erroneously referred to him as Giovanni Pietro. Mrs. Anna Bulgari has subsequently correctly identified the mark as that of Giovanni Francesco Travani.

The mark of Giovanni Giordani, *bollatore degli argenti* (assay-master) is found on silver assayed in Rome between 1670 and 1681, and is illustrated by Bulgari, op. cit., part I, Rome, Vol. I.







## Biographical Notes on Members of the Tavora Family

The coat-of-arms, argent five bars wavy azur, is that of the Tavora family of Portugal as used prior to the augmentation of a dolphin granted to the first Marquez de Tavora in 1671. The Tavoras traced their origins to the legendary medieval Kingdoms of the Asturias and Leon in the North West of the Iberian peninsula. By the 14th Century, Pedro Lourenço de Tavora enjoyed the favour of King Fernando I of Portugal who granted him extensive lands including the towns of S. João da Pesqueira and Mogadouro.

In 1504, Cristovão de Tavora was put in charge of a military expedition to India and in 1521 of a diplomatic mission to the Court of Savoy, connected with the betrothal of Princess Beatriz to the Duke of Savoy.

In 1559, Lourenço Pires de Tavora was appointed Ambassador to the Court of Pope Paul IV and subsequently to that of Pius IV by Catherine of Austria, Queen Regent of Portugal. This was undoubtedly one of the most brilliant periods of Portuguese diplomatic history when her influence as a great Catholic power was at its height. The Ambassador's diplomatic activities and his friendship with Pope Pius IV are related in Padre José de Castro's book "*Portugal e o Concilio de Trento*" and exchanges of presents between him and the Pope are well documented in the "*Manuscrito Urbano-Latino*" of the Vatican Library (page 1039 V) which states: "Roma, 25 Aprile 1562, tre giorni sono che parti di qua L'Ambasciatore del Portogallo il quale va carico di grazie che nostro signore li ha fatto, si per rispetto del suo re come per la persona di esso ambasciatore, il quale SUA SANTITA ha mostrato amar strettamente; et li fa le spese e fa accompagnare per tutto il STATO ECCLESIASTICO e di longo infinito a Ferrara": Rome 25th April 1562, three days have passed since the departure of the Ambassador of Portugal who leaves laden with the gifts which our Master has given him, in sign of respect for his King as well as for the person of this Ambassador to whom His Holiness has shown great affection, and he covered his expenses and had him escorted through all the Ecclesiastical State up to Ferrara.



Two of the Ambassador's sons were close personal friends and advisors to King Sabastião, 1557-1578, and fell fighting alongside of him in 1578 at the disastrous battle of Alcacer-Kibir in North Africa, which led to the Spanish domination over the throne of Portugal for the next sixty years. A third brother, Rui Lourenço de Tavora, was appointed Viceroy of India in 1608.

Other outstanding members of the family include Fernando de Sousa de Tavora who successfully captained Portuguese garrisons in India, the Red Sea and the Far East and Garcia Rodrigues de Tavora who distinguished himself in his remarkable defence of the Portuguese cities of Diu and Damão in India against the invading Abyssinians.

Meanwhile, in Portugal, Dom Frei Luis Alvares de Tavora and Dom Frei Luis de Tavora rose in the ranks of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. The former became Commander General of the Navy in Malta and later Bailiff of Leça.

The Tavora family was also powerful within the Church and Padre Francisco de Tavora, a Jesuit priest and theologian was called to Rome as a representative of the Portuguese Jesuits and in that capacity acted as *de facto* Ambassador to the Pontifical Court. In 1610, his cousin Dom Frei Lourenço de Tavora was appointed bishop of Funchal and Dom João Mendes de Tavora became bishop of Portalegre in 1632 and of Coimbra in 1638.

With the restoration of the Portuguese Monarchy in 1640, the Tavoras acquired additional power and prestige due to their support of the new dynasty of Braganza. In 1660 Dom Luis Manuel de Tavora was made a Marquess by the Prince Regent and the following year accompanied by Frei Filipe de Tavora e Noronha, he was sent to Rome as a member of the Special Embassy to the Court of Pope Clement IX. It was most probably on this occasion that the Pope presented the Marquez de Tavora with this magnificent dish. As it was only in 1671 that the Marquess was granted the augmentation of a dolphin to his coat-of-arms, the dish must have been commissioned prior to that date.

The third Marquess started his career as governor of the city of Chaves and in 1750 was appointed Viceroy of India by King João V. Together with his wife he established in Goa a court of great brilliance and refinement as well as an extremely efficient defence of the Portuguese outposts along the Malabar coast. Upon the death of King João, his son King José the Reformer acceded to the throne and throughout his reign, with the assistance of his minister the Marquez de Pombal, fought a ruthless battle to lessen the power and influence of the nobility and the Jesuits in favour of the Crown. When, in 1754, the Tavoras returned from India at the height of their power and wealth and accustomed to an almost royal status, their palace became the centre of the aristocratic and Jesuit opposition, and their downfall became only a question of time. In September 1758, a failed attempt on the King's life gave Pombal the opportunity to involve the Marquess and all his family in the plot. Following a quick trial, they were condemned to death, stripped of all their possessions and on 13th January 1759, were publicly tortured and executed. Their estates were seized, their archives destroyed and their name and coat-of-arms outlawed.



However, twenty-one years later, in 1780, Queen Maria successor to King José I, ordered the case to be re-opened in an attempt to establish the truth. In 1781, the Court proclaimed the Tavoras' innocence and their name was cleared and part of their artistic treasures returned to them. The Presentation dish must have been amongst them for we find it mentioned in the inventory made in 1835 for Vicente de Tavora e Noronha, from whom the dish passed by direct descent to the present owners.

This presentation dish is apparently the largest of a class of dishes which is best represented by a group of plaster casts in the Palazzo Pitti, Florence. These casts which measure about 75cm. in diameter are the sad relics of the dishes presented to the Grand Dukes of Tuscany at the feast of St. John the Baptist from 1680 to 1737. The silver originals from which they were made were melted down during the French invasion of Italy in 1800 (see Kirsten Aschengreen Piacenti, "I Piatti in Argento di San Giovanni", *Kunst des Barock in der Toskana* (Munich 1976), pp. 188-207).

The same source for the Rape of Europa was used by the Flemish goldsmith, Carol Bolcool, working in Genoa on a dish of 1674, now in the National Museum, Stockholm (Carl Hermmark, *The Art of the European Goldsmith, 1430-1830* (London, 1977, fig. 660).





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